Cultivation and Sale of Orchid Flowers

2657. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whewther Government are aware of a large variety of orchid flowers found in North-Eastern States;

(b) whether Government are aware that Far-Eastern countries earn huge amount of foreign exchange by the sale of orchid flower; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to promote the cultivation and rate of Orchid flowers in India and abroad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. B. P. B. K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Countries like Australia, Newzealand and Thailand export orchids and earn foreign exchange.

(c) Keeping in view the importance of orchids in North Eastern states one Model Floriculture Centre has been established in Sikkim under Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Commercial Floriculture' for production and preservation of Orchids and training of farmers in flower cultivation.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has established a National Research Centre (NRC) for orchid during 1995 for resolving the major constraints in production of orchids and other bulbous ornamentals in major orchid growing belts. More than 230 species belonging to 60 genera have been collected from North Eastern Region which are being evaluated. Besides 35 Cymbidium, 5 Dendrobicium, 2 Amada and 1 Vanda hybrids are also being maintained at the Centre.

APEDA arranged awareness programmes for the cultivation of orchids in Arunachal Pradesh during 1998. Besides, Seminars have been conducted in Sikkim to promote cymbidium orchids in the State.

Rate of cymbidiums in India is Rs. 60-70 per spike/stem (approx)

Rate of cymbidiums abroad is US $ 2.3 per spike/stem (approx).

Schemes for agricultural development in Maharashtra

2658. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of special schemes to modernise agriculture in Maharashtra to make the State self-sufficient in the production of foodgrains; and

(b) the details of steps taken to provide high yielding variety of seeds and fertilizers in time at cheaper rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. B. P. B. K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) There is no special scheme other than ongoing Central sector/centrally sponsored schemes to modernise agriculture in all States including in Maharashtra. However, the Government of Maharashtra has initiated steps to implement crop production strategies in consonance with the agro climatic zones, with the active involvement and support of Agricultural Universities located in the State.

(b) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is organising Zonal and All India Conferences with the States to take care of their requirement of improved seeds and fertilisers. While prices of urea are subject to price distribution and movement controls, there is a scheme for concessional sale of decontrolled fertilisers such as DAP MOP SSP and complexes.